

E A S T S I D E R A I L C O R R I D O R

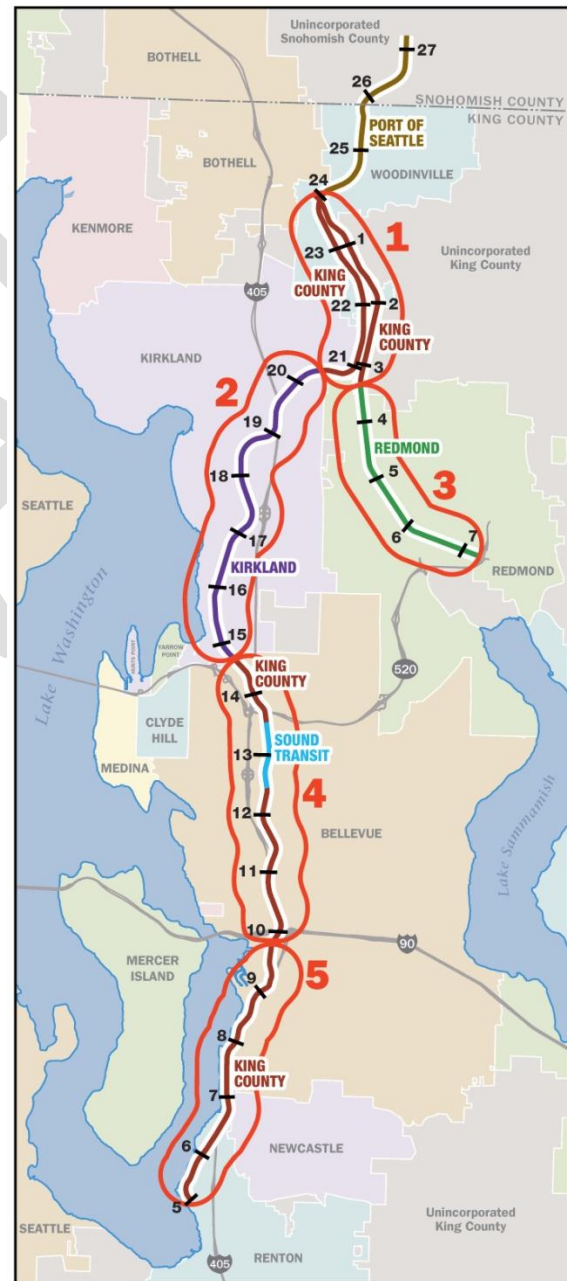
Segment 1: North King County

SEGMENT PROFILE

The Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) Regional Advisory Council (RAC) includes representatives of the owners of the railbanked portion of the ERC: King County, Redmond, Kirkland, Sound Transit, and Puget Sound Energy. The RAC has organized a cooperative planning effort to support the multiple use vision for the corridor.

To begin that effort, the RAC has divided the corridor into five planning segments. Technical staff has organized planning workshops for the three segments encompassing ownership by King County and Sound Transit to gather information about current and planned conditions. For the segments owned by the cities of Redmond and Kirkland, the RAC will coordinate with those cities' existing planning processes. The primary purpose of these workshops is to gather and begin synthesis of information that will support development of recommendations by the RAC to meet their charter.

For Segment 1, technical staff organized a site visit on July 11, 2013; and a full-day planning workshop at the Brightwater Education and Community Center on July 12, 2013. Staff from King County, Woodinville, Kirkland, Redmond, Snohomish County, Sound Transit, Puget Sound Energy (PSE), and Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) reviewed current conditions, future plans, and typical dynamic envelopes needed for rail, trail, and utility facilities.



SEGMENT DESCRIPTION

Segment 1 is located on both the Main Line and the Redmond Spur of the ERC. On the Main Line, it stretches from Milepost 20.3 (at the west edge of 132nd Avenue NE, which is the northern edge of the City of Kirkland's ownership) north to Milepost 23.8 (at the wye junction with the Redmond Spur). On the Redmond Spur, it stretches from Milepost 0.0 (in the vicinity of the wye junction with the Main Line) south to Milepost 3.4 (at NE 124th Street, which is the northern edge of the City of Redmond's ownership).

Segment 1 runs through the cities of Kirkland and Woodinville, as well as unincorporated King County.

Ownership. This segment of the corridor is railbanked, and King County has been designated the Interim Trail Sponsor. King County owns this segment, having acquired a combination of fee simple and railroad easement interests in 2013 from the Port of Seattle, which acquired BNSF's underlying ownership rights in 2009.¹

Sound Transit holds a high capacity transit easement in this segment and Puget Sound Energy holds a utility easement on, above, and below ground.

South of Segment 1 on the Main Line, the corridor is owned by the City of Kirkland; south of Segment 1 on the Redmond Spur, the corridor is owned by the City of Redmond. North of Segment 1, the corridor is owned by the Port of Seattle. The corridor north of Segment 1 is not railbanked and is in active freight use. King County owns a trail easement north of Segment 1, from Mileposts 23.8 to 27.4 (Brightwater).



¹ Due to railbanking, the corridor ownership remains intact, whether BNSF's original ownership rights – which were acquired at the turn of the 20th century – were fee simple ownership or railroad easement interests.

Surrounding jurisdictions. Segment 1 is located north of Redmond. It passes through the cities of Kirkland and Woodinville, as well as unincorporated King County. It is located east of highways I-405 and SR-522, and west of the Sammamish River.

Corridor topography and condition. Segment 1's topography varies significantly between the Main Line and the spur. The Main Line is located on a wooded slope, with steep grade changes between the rail bed and surrounding neighborhoods. The Redmond Spur, on the other hand, is located in a mostly flat area on the edge of the Sammamish Valley, and is therefore more accessible to adjacent uses.

The right-of-way on the Redmond Spur is very narrow in many places along this segment, narrowing to 30 feet for much of its length. The narrow right-of-way will make accommodating multiple uses challenging.

The railbanked portion of the corridor has not been maintained in several years. The Main Line, which travels through a wooded area, is heavily overgrown in many areas. The Redmond Spur, which travels through an open area, is less overgrown but will need ongoing maintenance and weeding. There are also a number of culvert maintenance issues in this segment, which will need to be addressed.

CURRENT USES AND FUTURE PLANS

Surrounding Land Use. This segment of the corridor passes through residential, industrial, commercial, and rural areas, as well as the Woodinville winery district and Central Business District.

- At the southern end of this segment, the County's ownership begins while still within the City of Kirkland. As the County-owned Main Line portion moves east, it comes within 300 feet of the Redmond spur portion of the corridor owned by the City of Redmond. Staff from Kirkland, Redmond and King County are working together to develop a safe east/west bike/pedestrian connection between the Main Line and Redmond Spur in the vicinity of Willows Road and NE 124th Street to provide a link between the Redmond and Kirkland downtowns.

Staff from the three jurisdictions are also beginning discussions about creating clear north/south linkages between the County-owned and Redmond- and Kirkland-owned segments of the corridor in this area.

- Moving north, the Main Line travels up and into a wooded area. These topographic changes will complicate connections to Kirkland's Kingsgate neighborhood, which is located to the west. The Redmond Spur continues flat along the edge of the rural Sammamish Valley. The Main Line and Redmond Spur are located close to each other throughout this segment, and roughly parallel to the Sammamish River and Sammamish River Trail.

- At NE 145th Street, the Main Line and Redmond Spur pass on either side of the Chateau Ste. Michelle winery. The Main Line is located above the winery in a wooded area, but there is a paved path to a former stop of the Spirit of Washington Dinner Train.
- The corridor then passes adjacent to the Columbia Winery and the other wineries, breweries, and distilleries in the Woodinville Winery District. The Redmond Spur is located closer to most of these facilities. There are a number of driveway crossings in this area. As noted above, the Redmond Spur, although flat, is only 30 feet wide in this area.
- The City of Woodinville owns property between the Main Line and the Olympic Pipe Line (which is located to the west of the corridor). This property is in the city's parks plan as a new park that would offer connections to the corridor.
- The two lines then come together in a wye that is located within the Woodinville Commercial Business District, an area that is planned for future growth and redevelopment. The wye marks the end of the railbanked area of the corridor; north of the wye, the corridor is owned by the Port of Seattle and remains in active freight use. The corridor is 100 feet wide in this area. The Sammamish River Trail crosses under the corridor just north of the wye after passing adjacent to Wilmot Gateway Park and its paved trails. Connections between the corridor and the Sammamish River Trail could be made in this area. The City of Woodinville has plans for two road widening projects just north of the wye, and is working with the Port of Seattle to secure needed easements.

Recreation and trails. Segment 1 is located near a number of local parks and open spaces, including:

- Totem Lake Park (Kirkland)
- Sammamish Valley Park (Redmond)
- Wilmot Gateway Park (Woodinville)
- Planned park west of Main Line in Woodinville just south of wye

Segment 1 is also located near a number of north/south and east/west trails, including:

- Sammamish River Trail
- Tolt Pipeline Trail
- Little Bear Creek Linear Park (planned, Woodinville)

These potential connections, if developed, could offer many opportunities for corridor users, including the possibility to connect to downtown Kirkland and Redmond, the Burke-Gilman Trail to the north of Lake Washington and the University of Washington-Bothell, and north to Snohomish County and the Centennial Trail.

In some areas the Redmond Spur offers views of the Sammamish Valley agricultural area.

Transportation and rail uses. Segment 1 of the ERC travels parallel and to the east of I-405. The corridor north of the wye travels parallel and to the east of SR-522. Most of the public transportation in the area is centered around I-405 and SR-522, through there are trail connections via the Sammamish River Trail to the UW-Bothell campus.

As noted above, the corridor north of the wye (north of Segment 1) is not railbanked and is in active freight use. A freight operation uses that area of the corridor several days a week.

Several planning initiatives may affect the corridor in this area:

- **City of Woodinville street crossings and widening.** In preparation for anticipated growth, the City of Woodinville would like to complete two street widening projects, both on SR-202, that would affect the corridor north of the wye (note that both of these projects are located north of Segment 1, in the area of the corridor owned by the Port of Seattle and not in an area covered by the RAC's planning process):
 - A widening of the Sammamish River Bridge on SR-202 that will require easements from the Port of Seattle as well as from King County (because the end of the King County-owned Redmond Spur, in an area that is used for freight turn-around operations, will be affected). This project is fully funded and 90% designed. Environmental Review is complete.
 - The lengthening of a trestle to accommodate widening of SR-202 where the corridor crosses over SR-202. The City of Woodinville has suggested that the trestle could be widened when it is rebuilt in the event that the Port wishes to install double tracks in this area of the corridor or to accommodate a future trail (King County owns a trail easement in this area of the corridor). This project is not yet funded and no design work has been completed.

In addition, the City of Woodinville plans to create several new street connections as part of the Woodin Creek Village development, a mixed use residential and commercial development that will be located approximately ¼ mile south of the corridor in the city's central business district. That development is planning to create 800 new housing units, as well as commercial and retail space.

- **Sound Transit ST3 Planning.** Sound Transit's ST3 planning process will affect planning for this segment of the corridor, as Sound Transit evaluates the feasibility of passenger rail on the ERC between Woodinville and Renton. The City of Woodinville has identified a location for a potential platform for passenger rail. However, this location is north of the wye in the area designated for active

freight. Sound Transit's high capacity transit easement extends north only to the wye and therefore does not cover the area Woodinville has identified as a potential platform.

Utilities. Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) have utilities in the Segment 1 area of the corridor. In addition, the Olympic Pipe Line parallels a portion of this segment. Utility issues include:

- **PSE electric lines.** PSE has several electric transmission and distribution crossings of the corridor. In addition, there is a Seattle City Light transmission line that crosses the corridor at the northern end of the Kirkland segment. Puget Sound Energy is currently planning the location for a new Sammamish–Juanita 115 kV transmission line. The preferred final route would be located along the northern portion of the Kirkland-owned rail corridor, near Willows Road in the Redmond-owned area of the Redmond Spur (where PSE does not currently hold an easement) and along the southern part of the Main Line in this segment between Willows Road and 132nd Ave NE. PSE and King County staff are working together to plan for pole locations with respect to the Planned Trail Area designated by King County as part of the Regional Coordination and Cooperation Covenant Agreement (RCCCA).
- **PSE gas lines.** PSE has numerous gas crossings of the corridor. As with electric lines, future placement of gas crossings will depend on the needs of residents and businesses in the Eastside.
- **King County Wastewater.** King County's Eastside Interceptor (ESI) is not located within the corridor in Segment 1, but other County wastewater pipelines are. The York Force Main runs through the portion of the corridor located in Kirkland, then becomes the North Creek Force main east of Willows Road, traveling north through much of the corridor to the wye. These force mains are part of a 25-foot wastewater easement, to which King County staff will need ongoing access for maintenance. There are no major trunk lines along the Main Line north of NE 124th Street, although this could be a potential alignment for reclaimed water lines in the future.
- **Olympic Pipe Line.** The Olympic Pipe Line, which is operated by BP Pipelines, runs parallel to the corridor in this segment. See earlier comment about describing where this is.

NEXT STEPS FOR STAFF

The initial analysis and planning work in this segment have identified several next steps for staff. These tasks include:

- **Reach out to adjacent communities, businesses, and property owners regarding permitting and maintenance.** King County staff will continue to

reach out to corridor neighbors about its work evaluating and renewing crossing and special use permits on the corridor now that King County has assumed ownership; and about the maintenance work King County has begun to clear invasive and hazardous vegetation, clean culverts, and address graffiti problems.

- **Coordinate with Sound Transit on ST3 planning.** Staff will work with Sound Transit as it begins the corridor studies that are part of ST3.
- **Study pinch points and analyze alternatives for multiple use scenarios.** Staff from King County, Sound Transit, and Puget Sound Energy have developed high-level dynamic “envelope” estimates for the typical clearances that are generally needed around and between different types of rail, trail, and utility facilities. As part of the County’s master planning effort, which will follow this phase of the RAC’s work, the master planning team will conduct a detailed evaluation of pinch points along the corridor and analyze alternatives for multiple uses in those areas. In particular, PSE, City of Kirkland, and King County staff are working together to plan for pole locations for the Sammamish-Juanita transmission line with respect to the Planned Trail Area designated by King County as part of the Regional Coordination and Cooperation Covenant Agreement (RCCCA).

ISSUES FOR RAC CONSIDERATION

Analysis of Segment 1 has highlighted a number of segment-specific opportunities and constraints the RAC may wish to consider as planning for the corridor continues.

1. **Kirkland-Redmond connections.** Staff from Kirkland, Redmond, and King County have identified a potential east-west connection between the Main Line and the Redmond Spur along Willows Road just north of NE 124th Street. RAC members may wish to study this potential connection as a way to provide safe bike and pedestrian connections between the Redmond and Kirkland downtowns.

In addition, staff have begun discussions about the need for clear north-south connections between the Kirkland- and County-owned portions of the Main Line and the Redmond- and County-owned portions of the Redmond Spur in this area.

2. **Trail coordination.** This area of the corridor has the potential for a number of parallel trails, as the Main Line, Redmond Spur, and Sammamish River Trail are all located within approximately ½ mile of each other. Identifying the different characteristics of each corridor, as well as future needs for capacity, will be crucial to ensure the needs of regional trail users and to coordinate with other uses.

3. **Economic development opportunities.** The corridor travels through the Woodinville Winery District, an area that offers significant opportunities for tourism and economic development. Coordinated planning will be crucial to maximize the economic development opportunities of this area, while preserving the unique attributes that make the winery district so special.
4. **Woodinville coordination.** The Woodinville Central Business District is located adjacent to the corridor, stretching across both the north end of Segment 1 and the south end of the active freight use area of the corridor. Woodinville is planning for significant growth, which it hopes to coordinate with opportunities along the corridor as well as with connections to the Sammamish River Trail and the proposed Little Bear Creek Linear Park.
5. **Connections to the north.** North of Segment 1, the corridor remains in active freight use. The Port of Seattle owns this area of the corridor, and King County owns a trail easement. Coordinating trail development with active freight use and fostering connections to and through Snohomish County (which is hoping to purchase trail easements of the corridor within Snohomish County) will be crucial to fulfill the long-term vision for the corridor. Studying transit and rail connections in this area will also be important: Sound Transit's high capacity transit easement ends at the north end of Segment 1, and the area of Snohomish County in the corridor is not in Sound Transit's service area, both of which will challenge planning for future passenger rail uses in this area.

SUMMARY

The site visit and planning workshop for Segment 1 have highlighted a number of issues and opportunities for the multiple usage of the Eastside Rail Corridor in this area. Additional study, work, and outreach on these issues will help the RAC understand segment development potential and interconnectivity and plan how to achieve its multi-purpose vision for this segment and for the entire Eastside Rail Corridor.

Similar planning studies for the other segments of the corridor with King County and Sound Transit ownership, and collaboration with Kirkland and Redmond on their local planning efforts, will allow the RAC to identify a common set of issues and policies for the Eastside Rail Corridor and recommend next steps for planning for the corridor's multi use development, as well as for long-term connections through and beyond the central Puget Sound region.